

# THE CEA CRITIC

Formerly THE NEWS LETTER of the College English Association

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October, 1953

## Analysis the Heart of Literature?

The old order changeth. . . . In presenting an introduction to literature some teachers emphasize analysis, and others try to ride five or six horses at a time. Regardless of the method, the facts are that about half of the students who launch on a B. A. program never clutch the diploma while their families photograph them in cap and gown in front of the college chapel; that many students are coerced into the courses; and that most have no preparation in literary criticism and usually insufficient knowledge of reading and interpretation of the language—incipient musicians, pictorial artists, stock brokers, and grade school teachers.

In spite of the facts, a new order insists that analysis is the heart of literature—à la Cleanth Brooks or Yvor Winters or Crane. Though these gentlemen have been known to change their minds, some departments hold to their analysis, the study of the harmony of the parts to the whole, and to a general avoidance of social implications. Some practitioners of literature have ignored Taine to embrace a nebulous new criticism. Much of the "objectivity" in method includes various parts of Aristotle, Aquinas, and semanticism expressed in words for which the dictionaries offer scanty definitions. The personalism of the new poetry has been reinforced by the terminology of the new criticism, a polyglot mixture of American Southern Agrarianism, English conservatism, and radicalism, and general impressionism.

### Doubting Thomas

Talks with a variety of teachers and some introspection about their writings have inclined this writer to doubt. Can T. S. Eliot be reconciled to Aristotle? Will the average student, with an I. Q. of about 110, profit much from a method that tends to bury the emotions and the thought of a work? How can anyone assert that a modern scholasticism will move the students to like reading? Should teachers assume that habits of analysis are more persistent than remembrance of content?

There are no empirical answers. The responses are subjective. Fealty to catchwords and formulas is as vague as adherence to Matthew Arnold's ideas of culture, according to which the touchstones of past works, properly interpreted, will lead one away from vulgarity to celestial light.

### Undirected Conclusions?

One of the universities addicted to analysis has an "introductory" course in literature, but a prerequisite is an "appreciation" course laden with criticism. This endeavor in the humanities includes dissection of *King Lear*, *Volpone*, *Paradise Lost*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Lord Jim*. Among these the common denominator is hard to find. Obviously, the works can change from quarter to quarter, and analysis may become a universal method, if the teacher

can avoid details pertaining to time, ethnological group, and milieu. If he owns such powers, he need recant before no mortal. Still, his selection of materials, like the selection of characters and incidents in a novel, can lead to a directed conclusion. Everyone has something of Croce in him. Some teachers of language and literature assert that all have a right to evaluate and analyze, as long as the evaluation and analysis of others agree with preconceived concepts. Some toss out their own catchwords—"felicity of expression," "delving into the realities," and "taste"—and wave their own banners of compulsion. All who insist, work toward a directed conclusion, sometimes as unobjective as the post-mortem opinion that John Stuart Mill had an I. Q. of 200 and Milton an I. Q. of 220.

### Can Analysis Create?

Not even those who beat their heads against a wailing wall, a common retreat of teachers, can, without restraint, proclaim that literature has only one goal. Literature is life and psychology and sociology. The study of literature, the study of written records, philology, involves more than one concept or one method. Since the creative processes are a mystery and there exists no absolute pattern for constructing art in any form, absolute theories become merely hopes, sometimes dictatorships, of intellectuals. After all, Franklin, Lincoln, and Mark Twain lacked most of the benefits of a directed education but contrived to stand above other men, projecting beauties not before known. Can formal analyses produce a Shakespeare or even a Jack London?

Although the human mind is the most complex of all instruments within its own ken, one can conjecture beyond the limits of a pattern on one plane. For a sophomore-junior course to introduce literature, a teacher can hope to extend the reading range of his students. He can hope to suggest taste, built on works known and read for centuries, and shrug off Mickey Spillgore and *Forever Under*. He can assert that various sectarian novels are cheap and poor in technique. He may evoke Plato's *furor poeticus* as a means of suggesting how a work is done, and he may even think of Shelley's assertion that his pen could not keep up with his inspiration. He probably will guess why a poet could do his best work without an analytical doubt, and he will wonder whether Shakespeare thought of the structure of every period before he inked it.

### Avoid Unifelike Formulas

This is a way of saying that methodology cannot be escaped, for some of the best hacks subscribe to learn parcels of it in writers' magazines; but that the human mind, when free and untrammeled, adheres to no iron maiden. Students wish for analysis, interpretations (Continued on Page 2, Column 1)

## PROGRAM

The 1953 College English Association Institute

at

The Corning Glass Center

Corning, New York

October 15-17, 1953

Theme: Business and the Liberal Arts: An Exchange

Thursday, October 15, 1953

9:00 a. m., Registration — The Library

10:30 - 12:00 m. General Session

The Institute Convened—Gordon Keith Chalmers, President, Kenyon College. (General Chairman)

Greetings—Arthur A. Houghton, Jr., President, Steuben Glass, Inc.

Remarks—Everett Needham Case, President, Colgate University (Session Chairman)

The Liberal Arts—Where Do They and Should They Stand?—Alvin Eurich, Vice President, The Fund for the Advancement of Education

Increasing Recognition by Industry of Its Obligations to the Liberal Arts—Courtney C. Brown, Assistant to the Chairman of the Board, The Standard Oil Company (New Jersey)

12:30 - 2:30 p. m. Luncheon—Presiding: Louis M. Lyons, Curator, The Nieman Foundation for the Advancement of Journalism, Harvard University

The New Illiteracy—William H. Whyte, Jr., Assistant Managing Editor, *Fortune*

Business and the Disciplined Imagination—Gordon Keith Chalmers

3:00 - 5:00 p. m. Lecture, Tour—James Brown III, Director, The Corning Glass Center

7:00 p. m. Dinner

Presiding: Gordon Keith Chalmers

Greetings from The CEA—William L. Werner, Professor of English Literature, Pennsylvania State College

The Problems of Higher Education in the Western Democracies—C. W. de Kiewiet, President, The University of Rochester. Chairman, The American Council of Learned Societies

Friday, October 16, 1953

9:15 - 10:30 a. m. Panel Discussion I.

Question: How can the humanities most effectively contribute to the shaping of the managerial leader?

Moderator: William G. Caples, Vice President, The Inland Steel Company

Presentation: The Qualities We Look for in Our Potential Managerial Leaders—Albert L. Nickerson, Vice-President and Director of Foreign Trade, The Socony-Vacuum Oil Company

Discussion

Group A. Moderator: William G. Caples

Panelists:

Emmett W. Bates, Vice President, The American Book Company

Irving Churchill, Professor of English, Coe College

James W. Culliton, Administrative Head, Experimental Program for Administrators, University of Notre Dame

Frederic E. Pamp, Jr., Division Manager, American Management Association

Bernard Ulmer, Associate Professor of German, Princeton University

Commentators:

Richard S. Bowman, Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature, The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art

Ernest Ernest, Chairman, English Department, Temple University

Douglas W. Peterson, Assistant to the Director, Master of Arts in Teaching, Yale University

Recorder: Ned R. Allen, Head, English Department, University of Delaware

Evaluator: George F. Horner, Director, General College English, University of North Carolina

Group B. Moderator: Kathrine Koller, Chairman, Department of English, University of Rochester

Panelists:

Edward Engberg, Associate Editor, *Fortune*

John S. Diekhoff, Professor of Education, Hunter College

Quentin McAllister, Chairman, Department of Modern Languages, Meredith College

(Continued on Page 6)

## THE CEA CRITIC

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(Continued from Page 1)  
of meaning, and sometimes exposition in ethnology and ethics. No teacher can ignore the fact that the literature of power never twice follows the same pattern, that an analytical method is itself a compromise. Most important of all, the incipient brokers' clerks, junior executives, and even teachers are likely to shun literature if it is constricted into a series of formulas that do not seem like life.

WALTER MANEIKIS  
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### Linguistics for the English Major

The English major is traditionally expected to know the art of his language, but he will be much better equipped if he also knows something of the science of it.

His best approach to the science of English will be through the science of language in general; in other words, the method of comparative philology. A simple yet profitable thing for him to memorize early in his linguistic work is a table of the numerals one through ten, spelled out in ten different languages: Primitive Indo-European, Sanskrit, Lithuanian, Greek, Latin, French, Gothic, German, Anglo-Saxon, and English. The table illustrates several important principles of linguistics, and it certainly is comparative.

#### Course Requirements

A one-year course in linguistics should be required of the English major, and the following are some of the topics which should be covered: simple phonetics, assimilation and dissimilation, umlaut, Grimm's and Verner's Laws, the stress accent; Primitive Indo-European as an hypothesis; analogy, popular etymology, picturesque origins of words; contexts and connotations, the effect of linguistic pattern and structure on thinking; the prescriptive versus the descriptive; ways in which meanings change, the "semantic triangle," abstractions. Note that the work is not confined to Middle English and Anglo-Saxon; it is, in a way, basic to those and to several other languages.

The two chief characteristics of Germanic are the first consonantal shift, covered by Grimm's and Verner's Laws; and a strong stress accent. Grimm's and Verner's Laws are important and fascinating, and in connection with cognate words they should get much of the student's attention throughout the course. Even more significant, however, is the stress accent; for stressed syllables tend to survive, while unstressed ones tend to disappear.

Daniel Jones' vowel quadrilateral, since it indicates for the vowels the places of phonation in the buccal cavity, helps the student to understand, for instance, German and English umlaut, as *feet* instead of "foots;" and a corresponding device for the consonants helps him to understand assimilation. A "semantic triangle" shows him something of the relationship between symbol and the thing symbolized, and an "abstraction ladder" or a "structural differential" gives him some hold on abstractions—if such is possible.

#### Picturesque Origins

Folk etymology is usually fascinating to the student—e. g. the reason for the *r* in bridegroom or the use of *love* in tennis instead of *lœuf*. And the origins of many words will appeal to him because of their picturesqueness; e. g., Primitive Indo-European \*al 'to cause to rise up or to nourish' gives such words as *altar*, *altitude*, *alimentary*, *alderman*, *all*, *abolish*, *adolescent*, *old*, *world* (Anglo-Saxon *weoruld*, in which *weor* means 'man,' as in *werewolf*, being cognate with Latin *vir* 'man'); so *world* originally meant 'the age of man'; and especially *alma mater* 'nourishing mother,' *alumnus* 'one who has been nourished' (by the

alma mater'); and *alimony*, originally 'the means for providing nourishment.' Incidentally, the money of *alimony* has no direct connection with *money*; and, to be sure, Aly and his money have had nothing to do with the formation of the word!

#### Stop Mortifying!

So the English major needs to develop a critical and analytical attitude toward language, and to find out how and why language works; he needs to become objective, descriptive, inductive in his method, and somewhat wary toward the deductive. He will then be able to see beyond the products of the traditional grammarian and lexicographer and will understand that the little fellow who says "I ain't got none" is not only being natural but is enjoying good company.

It should be realized that whereas some progress in life may come from resisting (better *sublimating*) natural tendencies, there is no particular virtue in mortifying the natural merely for the sake of mortifying—as so many pedants and purists seem to want to do. And as to good company in double negatives, Shakespeare eminently qualifies; so do Xenophon and Plato; and in the interim is King Alfred in "Orpheus and Eurydice": "No hart did not shun no lion, nor no hare no hound, nor did no animal not know no malice nor no fear toward another"!

JAMES T. BAERS  
Northeastern University

### Obiter Visa

Item: in the *Herald Tribune Book Review* (Roy Campbell's *Light on a Dark Horse*) for February 15, 1953:

The boy had a passion for the sea, seen first as a baby, through the legs of a horse.

Item: in the *Times Literary Supplement* (Anthony Smith's *Blind White Fish in Persia*) for February 20, 1953:

The funniest of his stories is that of The Beard, The Barber and the Bananas, but it begins with the joke badly against himself:

"Shortly afterwards, carrying a kilo of bananas which had been bought on the way, a shop which looked sufficiently decrepit presented itself before me.

Score one (or two) for the British. Their reviewer nails the boxer, while ours is making one.

TOM BURNS HARRIS  
Ohio State University

### Good Source Material

This month's supplement, a discussion of the reviving interest in religious books, is distributed through the courtesy of *Harper's Magazine*, which supplied the reprints, and as the result of a suggestion received from Charles Wallis, Keuka College, who felt that there was "good source material here for all English instructors."

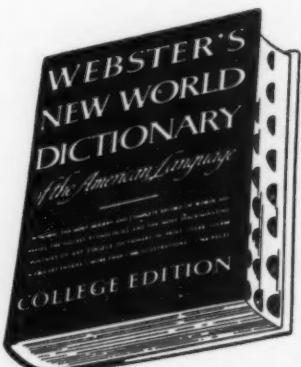
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## Publicity and the Split Infinitive

"Professor says split infinitive O. K."

Such journalistic stereotypes remind us that split infinitives, double negatives, prepositions at the end, and mayhem on pronouns are still regarded as newsworthy. "Usage (I quote from the same news story) determines what is appropriate, effective — and correct." (The dash throws down the gauntlet.) For grammar has now become "the science of reporting how the English language works here and now," repudiating the rubbish carried forward from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

## Look Twice

We recognize the argument, and its modicum of cogency. But let us look twice — and blush for the professor who courts such easy publicity. For the implication to the casual reader is that the vernacular is quite adequate as it is, thank you, and in no need of pedagogical nursing; that purists and pedants are pitiable creatures; and that one may now (with professional approval) relax with a comfortable confidence into the easy habits of every day. Indeed, some widely used college texts manage to convey a not dissimilar reassurance.

Aside from the fact that the argument for usage is hardly new — e. g., Priestly in the maligned eighteenth century — the true Achilles heel of the emphasis lies in the stubborn fact of the *levels* of usage. However equalitarian usage may be, social and intellectual levels of speech will forever (that is, within a given period of history) prevent formal acceptance of many a locution. Usage is not a simple force in one direction only, but rejects as well as accepts. It may be adduced by a convinced egalitarian or by an equally stubborn *arbiter elegantiarum*. The usage of whom? If there be such a term as standard usage, then there must be departure from a standard. It then becomes a question as to who departs

most markedly, the man on the street or the purist.

It is not solely the pedant's inflexibility which holds the red pencil over "I haven't never saw him," or (quoting) "I decided to a certain extent ignore him." There is such a thing as awkwardness, ineptitude, insensitivity, or sheer lack of taste or ease in language. Pushed to its *reductio*, the argument for usage could become a fatalistic bowing to the "wave of the future." But a moment's reflection will show equally valid pressures from the mind in search of clarity, imposing a lower limit below which language does not function well. Usage is not delimited in time or space. One who knows the usage of centuries is in a far better position to weigh relative merits today, as one who knows the variants of his land and time will outrate any provincial in his judgment on language.

The argument is not, therefore, one of "proper" or "improper" usage, but one of the nicer points of language as a satisfactory tool. I deliberately avoid the "clear and effective tool" of conventional committees on language aims; for "clear" is less clear than it promises, and "effective" (radio *e-fective*) gleams too briskly of the marketplace.

## Language as a Tool

Even consideration of language as a tool will soon deviate from preoccupation with split infinitives to questions of the acuteness, the very edge and polish of the tool. To imply that efficiency is accomplished by an amiable relaxation of criteria is to falsify the story of language as man's finest achievement. Language shifts less rapidly than the exponents of usage imply, nor is it kept efficient without persistent concern for its subtleties, its complexities, its intricacies, its connotations and cadences. The linguist will not, of course, ignore current usage nor the vernacular. But it is the trained student of language who knows this, not the man in the street. For

## The Awkward Sentence

One of the most exasperating problems in teaching composition, I find, is to persuade a student that his awkward sentences are really awkward. Dangling modifiers, ambiguous reference of pronouns, misuse of adjectives for adverbs, and many other errors can easily be explained. But when a sentence is merely awkward — that can be difficult.

I remember the student who came to me one day with his term paper. I had underlined one of his sentences and in the margin had written *awkward*. "I don't see what's wrong with this," he said. I looked at the sentence trying to find some plain grammatical violation. There was none.

"There's no grammatical error. It's just awkward."

"No grammatical error?" he seized upon my admission. "You mean the sentence is correct?"

"I wouldn't put it that way. The sentence is awkward."

"It seems all right to me," he said.

I read the sentence aloud, emphasizing the awkwardness as well as I could, loading my voice with ridicule. "There. Doesn't that sound bad to you?"

"No."

I must have looked unhappy, for his voice took on a note of sympathy. "Isn't it just a matter of taste? Nothing wrong with the sentence, except it just doesn't happen to appeal to you?"

"But there is something wrong with it. Can't you see it's awk-

ward?"

"No I can't."

"Well," I said, "I think the average intelligent reader would find the sentence unsatisfactory."

"I don't see why he should."

The trouble, I decided, was simply this: the student who would write awkward sentences would for that very reason be slow to recognize an awkward sentence when it was pointed out. Was there nothing to be done?

## The Problem Solved

Trying an experiment, I culled fifteen of the worst sentences I could find in one set of papers, mimeographed them and handed a copy to each student in the class.

It proved a festive occasion, the students laughing at the shortcomings of one another. Not a single sentence stood up against the collective criticism of the class. More than one student who tried to defend his own sentence took a part in tearing down someone else's. I found the procedure successful, not only that day, but many times thereafter. Every student, it became clear to me, quickly understands that he writes for an audience and that he has failed when his audience considers his product unsatisfactory. When his work is rejected by his classmates, he has no choice except to try to turn out a better product.

DAVID M. REIN

Case Institute of Technology

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## Utility and Beauty

The moral is plain. The split infinitive will take care of itself if the function of language, which includes both utility and beauty, be kept before teacher and student. If or when meaning is clarified, ambiguity reduced, or grammatical habit or cadence not too greatly offended by a split infinitive, split it. The same criterion may be applied to any barbarism, solecism, idiomatic oddity or slang. If it be appropriate to its setting or add color or impact without unnecessary shock, use it. So language has grown, been modified, waxed and waned.

In the meantime, journalistic sallies such as "Professor says 'aint' is permissible," or "Professor okays the split infinitive," may be regarded as peripheral and of small consequence. Besides, do we not have the professor's word for it that *usage*, not a professional dictum, determines the outcome?

WILSON O. CLOUGH  
Univ. of Wyoming

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**A Torch to Melt Iron Curtains**

Poetry, like all sublime things, eludes definition as part of its sublimity. But this does not mean that we should not strive towards at least a partial explanation both of poetry and the poet. Mr. W. H. Auden thinks that a poet is "a man with a gift for writing verse." This is as unsatisfactory as it is ambiguous; indeed I would not quarrel with anyone who maintained that such a definition was precisely what a poet was not! For it is the mark of a true poet that he is able to lift verse from the plane of the merely metric into the region of poetry; to transmute *dicta*, the mere statement, into *dicenda*, the compelling utterance.

Thirty days hath September,  
April, June and November—

That is verse; but the following is poetry—

Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day.

Here is verse—Drop Thy still dews of quietness

Till all our strivings cease,

Take from our souls the stress and strain...

And here is poetry: O Cross that liftest up my head,

I dare not ask to fly from Thee;

I lay in dust life's glory dead,

And from the ground there blossoms red

Life that shall endless be.

To be sure, no one could describe where verse ends and poetry begins, any more than the horizon is determinable; but this is certain, that almost anyone can write verse, while very few achieve poetry.

**"A Man Speaking to Men"**

Wordsworth and Coleridge, because of their high claim for the poetic art, have been accused of defining "not the writer, but the hero about whom he writes, which for the Romantic are combined in the same person." (Auden) But of course they are; for it is just this fine sense of identity with all life, and with Mankind especially, that constitutes the poet. He is a man, one could almost say, more folk than the Folk itself, for the reason that he embodies a finer concentration of folk-wisdom. When Wordsworth affirms of the poet that "he is a man speaking to men" he must have had this folk quality of poetry in mind. We talk to ourselves in poetry, wholesomely, in the presence of our dual ownership, Nature and God. When this trinitarian rapport is effected the human spirit enjoys moments that partake of immortality. Here is the very poetic medium.

**Nursed into Religion by Poetry**

It follows, if my premise be true, that poetry is a unifying agent beyond the power even of religion. "The Hound of Heaven" is the work of a Roman Catholic; but as poetry it unites any and every objective reader. Nevertheless it is true to say that we were, and we are, nursed into religion by poetry. In this connection, something must have gone wrong with the Russian people for them to have repudiated the Poem Himself; to have blown out the Pilot Light. And something must have gone wrong too with their sense of humor; for atheism leaves Man to himself, which is as absurd as the concept of a great liner tied-up to a rowboat.

Time like an ever-rolling stream  
Bears all its sons away.

Exactly. Our stability and our permanence must rest in something other than ourselves. If you ask me what it is that tells me this, I would answer—Poetry; that incisive sense compact of wisdom and humor, together with what I can only call an instinctive and compelling devotion to the Ultimate.

**Think Till Your Words Catch Song**

Just as pedants dislike scholars, so also false and little men dislike poetry and poets, since these are the touchstones of sincerity, and indeed of Reality. Both expose the sham; and help to close the floodgates of evil. The end of poetry could be expressed as a fine integrity, far beyond the exactitudes of science. This integrity is so great, so artistic that it supercedes (though it includes) morality. "Love and do what you like," said Augustine profoundly: "Think till your words catch song," the poet could affirm, "and verge to the resonant hill of Reality itself." We may behold this happening in such a passage as that where Shakespeare (the actors do not really matter) says:

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!  
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music  
Creep in our ears; soft stillness and the night  
Become the touches of sweet harmony.  
Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven  
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:  
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st  
But in his motion like an angel sings,  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;  
Such harmony is in immortal souls;  
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

Carefully notice the speaker's total loss of himself until the very last; notice too his identity with Nature and the music of the spheres (no mere legend.) The next moment he will assume, as he must, the "muddy vesture" and embrace Jessica: for this universal love, once experienced, spills over to a fellow-creature, pouring itself into the mould of the first virtue. Contemplation, this is to say, issues in joy, and joy spends itself in love—lyric love. The passage quoted is followed by the stage direction "Enter Musicians." And then, significantly, this:

Come, ho, and wake Diana with a hymn:  
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear  
And draw her home with music.

**The Very Thought of Shakespeare****Lines for Poetry Day**

The very thought of Shakespeare warms my heart;  
Here is our comfort in the cold, dark hour:  
Without him midget men would be less big  
With littleness, would lose the comic touch.  
Oswalds, Iagos, Edmunds, Guildensterns  
Are with us yet, darker by his dark ink,  
Branched of his great quill in scalding words—  
"A giant's robe upon a dwarfish thief."

But, ah, he knew our proper giants too,  
Our Kents, Horatios, Othellos, Macduffs,  
God's gentlemen—and he begets them still  
Plentifully throughout the Globe itself  
To save us from despair, insure our loves,  
In those inevitable, swift fourth acts,  
There where the villain's refuge groans and falls  
And stricken banners hide his broken head.

His lineaments are gentle in us all;  
Who ride against us feel his viewless sword;  
The fadeless summer of his book has brought  
Bloom to the Rose of Freedom round the World:  
He sailed on the Mayflower. When Lincoln sang  
His requiem over the Dead at Gettysburg  
He did not chant alone. And when the final hymn  
Is raised upon the mount that Man has climbed  
Throughout the ages (inchin upon his knees  
Where the rock sheered and the crevasse yawned)  
Shakespeare will shout there too.

A. E. JOHNSON  
Syracuse University

Perhaps we can do no better than to say, in the difficult attempt to define poetry, that its function is to do just what Shakespeare here demands of music (though more powerfully than music)—to awake us, to stab us truly alive. And then to "draw us Home."

But what we mean by "Home" even the eloquent and powerful agency of poetry cannot express. It is enough to say that poetry makes us at home; that it presents us with new reasons for loving life; that it redeems us from despair; that it makes even wisdom rhythmic, whereby alone it assails us; that it uses up our fear as nothing else can. Magnetic, it joins men and women in a folk-fraternity, throwing down the barriers of race, and station, and wealth, and even personal endowment. Genius and Folk are met together; Music and the Word have kissed each other. Here is a torch that can even melt iron curtains; and so I have desired, regarding Poetry

.....that I could bring her lovely torch,  
Strong to illumine as to burn and blaze,  
And through the iron barrier carve a porch  
And enter in and shed truth's healing rays;  
That lay that curtain like a drawbridge low  
For every kindred heart to come and go.

A. E. JOHNSON  
University of Syracuse

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## Shakespeare and the Classroom

That Shakespeare must be kept alive for college students appears to be the determination of the modern teacher, to judge from the notes of last spring's Indiana CEA meeting devoted to the bard. The summary on which the following article is based was prepared by Cary B. Graham, Sect-Treas. of the Indiana CEA.

Ralph Collins, Indiana, tells us that students approach their first college course in Shakespeare with "excitement;" they must not be disappointed. He recommends avoidance of biographical data, background material, details of the theatre and audience, and professional criticism in the elementary course. It is best to allow the plays to "speak to the students directly in the ideas of their own day rather than in those of Shakespeare."

The freshman should learn "to read with imagination, with critical curiosity"; and the teacher should not depend on notes taken long ago. He must teach "as if he were still learning—as indeed he must be."

### Ingenuity and Poetry

Francis Fergusson, Visiting Prof. at Indiana Univ., in discussing *The Comedy of Errors* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, analyzed Shakespeare's theatrical intention. The former play is a masterpiece in the ancient tradition of the popular comedy later carried to its height by Molière; *Much Ado*, while just as ingenious, has a poetic intention and is tied together by a series of ritual scenes which bring it nearer to the "Old Comedy" of Aristophanes than to the "New Comedy" of Menander.

Both plays are based on mistaken identity, but in *The Comedy of Errors* it is an error in fact, while in *Much Ado* it is a failure of insight. *The Comedy of Errors* ends instantly when the facts are clear; the denouement of *Much Ado* takes the end of Act IV and all of Act V for it must present a

return of sanity, or an increase in spiritual vision. The three narratives of *Much Ado* end differently, as the characters see the truth; Claudio by way of his symbolic expiation-rite, Beatrice and Benedick through sympathy. At the end of *Much Ado* we see the characters in the Eden-like light of loving understanding. This produces a very special mood, and a certain kind of smile; but if the effect is "comic" it is not comic in the way *The Comedy of Errors* is.

### "The Vitality of Shakespeare"

Louis B. Wright, Director of the Folger Library and guest speaker at the meeting, summarized some of the concrete evidence of Shakespeare's living force in America. Shakespeare has been the most widely read author in the English-speaking world, and he has remained a live author for more than three hundred years because he wrote for the generality of mankind and not for an intellectual clique or cult of highbrows.

Americans particularly have read Shakespeare with approval and quoted him as a man of wisdom. On the American frontier, Shakespeare and the Bible were the two most influential works and helped to mould American minds. His plays were acted by both professional and amateur companies in the Wild West when the war-whoop of Indians had scarcely stopped echoing on the plains. In San Francisco during the Gold Rush, miners came in from the gold fields to witness *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet* or *Macbeth* and used nuggets to buy tickets from early scalpers. He was quoted by frontier politicians and country editors to give authority to their words.

### Becoming Highbrow!

Only in recent years has Shakespeare become "highbrow." Whether that means that our taste is changing—and deteriorating—or that Shakespeare is being badly taught, no one can say. But he is still an author with tremendous appeal, as witness the popularity

## What Comes First?

I fail to see the purpose of those who favor Modern Literature as a first course in Literature. We are too close to the contemporary scene, changing and shifting as it is, to justly evaluate its literary material. Who knows whether two years from now the same material will be considered literature, so why teach it as a First Course? The Library of Oxford permits no book a permanent place on its shelves until it has been in demand for five years, deeming the perspective of time necessary in evaluating literature.

### Logic Above All

Moreover, why place Modern Literature first when we know that practically all the writings of screen versions of his plays. Regrettably, his plays have also been reduced to comic book versions, and you can read something called *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* in the so-called comics. Shakespeare remains "Big Business" with the publishers, with the theatrical producers, and with a large portion of the American public.

### Symposia on Teaching

According to three symposia held on teaching problems, the problem in teaching Shakespeare is how to break down the wall between him and the students. Readings, skits, contests, recordings, dramatic presentations were suggested; also, the value of beginning a course with a romantic comedy. Dr. Wright contributed to one of the discussions by stating that Shakespeare should be taught as a playwright, not as a philological exercise. Teachers should not underestimate the value of class reading and explication.

### Lover or Scholar?

A symposium on the tragedies emphasized that we must teach Shakespeare for personal impact and that there has been too much emphasis on research in the past, without enough attention to what Shakespeare can mean to the reader. If a student can correlate a Shakespearean situation and a modern one, he has felt the impact of Shakespeare, and if he sees the Shakespearean characters as real people, he will be aware of the poet's vitality.

### The Actual Course

It was noted that the approach of Harold C. Goddard's *The Meaning of Shakespeare* which sees Shakespeare in the light of modern psychological developments is helpful to undergraduates. Paul E. McLane, Notre Dame, recommended that a good course require the reading of many of the plays but include a thorough discussion of only a few. For example, it is a good plan to analyze one tragedy, then read *Othello* and give a test on it without detailed discussion.

Among specific bits of advice to the teacher were the following: make the students aware of the convention of language which bound Shakespeare; lead them to see the unfolding of character despite the language limitation; make clear the connection between the plot and the universal truth behind it; teach the plays in chronological order rather than by types; include in the course the four great tragedies, the three high comedies, *Richard II*, *Henry IV*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Julius Caesar* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

today have a definite dependence on our literary heritage of the past? Teach Modern Literature in its place, but to me the logical place to introduce the students to literature is at the beginning. The lack of orderly thinking on the part of our students can be traced to our own lack of method—beginning at the end, a fragment here, a fragment there according to our interest. What can we expect of our students but disjointed, disorganized, superficial information with no depth, no real knowledge of literature or life?

If we are logical in our presentation of material, we can at least hope to train logical thinkers. We need not live in the Past, but we can recognize its worth. Our automotive age of streamline and free-wheeling has so influenced our literary judgment that nothing but the newest is accepted.

Carl Sandburg: "I tell you the past is a bucket of ashes." And yet Newton: "If I saw farther, it was because I stood on great shoulders!"

### The Past Not Difficult

I find no difficulty in presenting the Anglo-Saxon Period with its wealth of interesting material. *Beowulf*, with its epic sweep, revealing the elemental emotions of our Teutonic forefathers, marks the beginning of our literature and here is the place to begin its study. A contrasting study of *Beowulf* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is of interest for story values as well as to see the Anglo-Saxon Warrior of the Epic transformed under the influence of Christianity into the Medieval Knight. The same interest I find carried over to *Piers the Plowman*, giving the student a key to many of today's problems. Piers popularized the philosophy of the dignity of man, the dignity of honest labor, individual moral responsibility not relative morality. These are the basic philosophies for religious and racial tolerance so necessary in a democracy.

A study of Chaucer in the Middle English offers no great difficulty. What if it did? It is about time our College students were served with something besides sugar-coated delectables. At this point come to mind:

A Certain Little Girl  
She licked the icing off; then found  
Her cake too dry, she said,  
She plucked the nuts and raisins  
out;

Then didn't want her bread.  
And these eclectic habits were  
Too pleasant to outgrow  
That's why today, at twenty-five,  
She finds Life chokes her so.

FRED J. DONOVAN  
R. I. Col. of Ed.

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## CEA Institute Program at Corning

(Continued from Page 1)

Robert F. Moore, General Manager, Richardson, Bellows, Henry & Company, Inc.  
 Joseph Weil, Dean, College of Engineering, University of Florida

## Commentators:

Edward Huberman, Department of English, Newark College of Rutgers University  
 Howard Lee Nostrand, Chairman, Department of Romance Languages and Literature, University of Washington  
 MLA representative

Recorder: Harold W. Blodgett, Chairman, English Department, Union College

Evaluator: Leslie Hanawalt, Chairman, English Department, Wayne University

## 11:00 - 12:30 p. m. Panel Discussion II

Topic: *Spelling it out: the specifics of business-liberal arts exchange*

Presentation: *As a College President Sees It*—Carter Davidson, President, Union College

## Discussion

Group A. Moderator: Herbert E. Longenecker, Dean of the Graduate School, University of Pittsburgh

## Panelists:

Albert L. Ayars, Education Director, Hill and Knowlton, Inc.  
 Bernice Brown Cronkhite, Dean, Radcliffe College  
 Sol M. Linowitz, Sutherland, Linowitz and Williams  
 A. M. Sullivan, Director of Public Relations, Dun and Bradstreet, Inc.

## Commentators:

W. M. Curtiss, Director, Fellowship Program, Foundation for Economic Education, Inc.  
 William Scott Willis, Assistant to the Dean, Washington Square College of Arts and Sciences, New York University

Recorder: Lloyd Davidson, Chairman, Department of English, Wells College

Evaluator: Hoover H. Jordan, Department of English, Michigan State Normal College

Group B. Moderator: Jean Paul Mather, Provost, University of Massachusetts

## Panelists:

J. R. Cominsky, Publisher, *The Saturday Review*  
 Reuben Frodin, Executive Dean, State University of New York  
 Rudolph Neuburger, President, The Tuition Plan, Inc.  
 Julian Street, Jr., Special Assistant, United States Steel Corporation  
 John P. Tolbert, Socony-Vacuum Oil Company

## Commentators:

Francis P. King, Research Associate, Teachers' Insurance and Annuity Association  
 Robert W. Krovitz, Boston Mutual Life Insurance Co.  
 Scholarship Director, Alpha Epsilon Pi Fraternity  
 Recorder: William T. Beauchamp, Department of English, State University Teachers' College, Geneseo, N. Y.  
 Evaluator: Glenn A. Christensen, The Institute of Research, Lehigh University

## 12:45 - 2:30 p. m. Luncheon

Presiding: Gordon Keith Chalmers  
*The Managerial Leader and The Arts of the Theatre*—Francis Fergusson, Professor of English, Rutgers University  
*The Humanities, The Social Sciences, and Education for Leadership*—Elmer E. Schattschneider, Professor of Government, Wesleyan University

## 3:00 - 5:00 p. m. General Session followed by Seminars

Presiding: Robert C. Whitford, Dean, Division of General Studies, Pratt Institute

Presentation: *Problems the Liberal Arts Graduate Faces in Trying to Get into Industry*—F. Kenneth Brasted, Director, Education Department, National Association of Manufacturers

## SEMINARS:

1. *The liberal arts graduate, the pronouncements of senior management, and recruiting practice.*

This has reference to the discrepancy between senior management endorsement of the liberal arts for management careers and the recruiters' continued major demand for graduates of the narrow curricula.

Leader: John Ball, Miami University, President, American Business Writers' Association

Analysts:

Lou Russell, Director of Placement, The University of Houston

Viola Saltmarsh, Director of Placement, Tufts College

Recorder: Anna M. Hanson, Director of Placement, Simmons College

Evaluator: Dorothy Miles, Adviser to Students in Liberal Arts, Wayne University

2. *Business, the liberal arts, and their shared problems of public relations.*

It has been asserted that neither business nor the liberal arts have done an adequate job of recognizing their own distinctive values and that this failure in proper self-recognition largely accounts for the limited effectiveness of their efforts to interpret themselves to their publics, and to each other. This seminar will explore both the problem of right self-recognition and that of effective interpretation.

Leader: Robert J. Jones, Educational Relations Section, Public Relations Department, General Motors Corp.

Analysts:

Lionel Conrath, Associate Editor, *The American Metal Market*

Terry Ferrer, Education and Religion Editor, *Newsweek*

Robert Luce, Associate Editor, *Changing Times*, The Kiplinger Magazine

Albert Lynd, Lynn Baker, Inc.

Recorder: Lyda McHenry, School of Business Administration, Wayne University

Evaluator: Raymond Walters, Jr., Book Editor, *The Saturday Review*.

3. *The book, the teacher, and the future managerial leader.*

In this seminar, a teacher will explain why and illustrate how he teaches a pre-announced piece of literature that can be treated as a unit within the limits of the session. Copies of this piece will be available to Institute members beforehand. Implications of the demonstration and the discussion, for the future managerial leader, will be brought out.

Leader: William Jameson, Jr., Department of English, University of Rochester

Analyst: Robert T. Fitzhugh, Department of English, Brooklyn College

Commentator: Brother Cormac Philip, Head, Department of English, Manhattan College

Recorder: David H. Webster, Department of English, Temple University

Evaluator: Frederick L. Gwynn, Department of English Literature, The Pennsylvania State College

Director of Seminars No. 4a. and 4b.: Henry Sams, Director of The Summer Quarter, University of Chicago

4a. *The teaching of English and the writing of reports.*

A man from industry shows what is likely to be wrong with technical reports, and someone else shows how the English teacher may help improve the situation. A bad report will be analyzed; its faults exposed; improvement made.

Leader: Cleo A. Brown, Head, Department of English and Psychology, General Motors Institute

Analyst: Lisle Rose, University of Illinois, Chairman, Public Relations Committee, American Society for Engineering Education

Recorder: Frank E. Craig, State University Maritime College, Fort Schuyler, N. Y.

Evaluator: James Barrs, Department of English, Northeastern University

Consultants:

Philip Gove, General Editor, G. & C. Merriam Co.  
 George Hinds, Director, Adult Education Program, Speech Department, Wayne University

4b. *Communication, the humanities, and the managerial leader.*

Maurice Graney, Head of the Department of Industrial Management at Purdue University, has stated that the "techniques" are merely the "chromium-plate" of communication, and he has stressed that the character of the communicator is crucial to effective communication. For the character of the speaker or writer will decisively influence both his own effort at communication and the attitude of the intended recipients of his communication. If so, then do not the humanities have a central role to play in the development of the effectively communicating managerial leader; for have not the humanities professed to educate for sound character?

Leaders: Maurice R. Graney, Head, Department of Industrial Management, Purdue University

Kenneth L. Knickerbocker, Department of English, University of Tennessee

Recorder: Stanley M. Kinney, Chairman of Speech, Colgate University

Evaluator: Howard Vincent, Chairman, Department of English, Illinois Institute of Technology

(Concluded on Page 7)

## From Andrewes to Vaughan

Seventeenth-Century Verse and Prose. Volume One: 1600-1660. Edited by Helen C. White, Ruth C. Wallerstein, and Ricardo Quintana. New York: The MacMillan Company. 1951. xiv-409 pp. \$4.50.

Ivory-tower enthusiasts and lovers of pure literature will rejoice in this anthology, for it is devoted largely to the delights of the muses, interspersed with occasional steps to the temple, as is inevitable in the period from 1600 to 1660. Those who prize writings for their social significance will be disappointed: the literatures of Puritanism, science, journalism, utopianism, social criticism, and history are almost completely absent from the selections. One looks in vain even for Fuller, Howell, Felltham, Quarles, Drummond, Herbert of Cherbury, Liburine, Selden, Bishop Godwin, Winstanley, and the Puritan preachers. Nevertheless, the faults of earlier collections have been avoided: there is no unnatural divorce of poetry from prose; modern spellings and doubtful emendations have been avoided; and the editors in their introductions have wisely made no attempt to match the somewhat gushing pseudo-baroque style which blights one of their predecessors.

Anthologies of this kind are at once a blessing and a curse: they should pave highway to the Library stacks; far too often they block the student from exploring the delightful byways of collected works. Unfortunately this textbook does its job rather well and deserves to be widely adopted.

J. MAX PATRICK  
Queens College

(Continued from Page 6)

## 7:00 p. m. Dinner

Presiding: Gordon Keith Chalmers  
*By Way of Challenge and Reply*

Presentation: William G. Caples, Vice President, Inland Steel Company

## Commentators:

John Ciardi, Department of English, Rutgers University, Editor, Twayne Editions

D. H. Daugherty, Assistant to the Director, American Council of Learned Societies

Milton M. Enzer, Director of Public Relations, Yale and Towne Manufacturing Company

Ranlet Miner, Vice Chairman, Board of Directors, The Pfaudler Company

Howard Lee Nostrand, University of Washington, Representative, Modern Language Association of America, Guggenheim Fellow

Saturday, October 17, 1953

## 9:00 - 11:45 a. m. Plenary Session

Chairman: James McL. Tompkins, Executive Offices, International Underwriters of Latin America. Member, Advisory Council, CEA Institute.

Speaker: Harry D. Gideonse, President, Brooklyn College.

The 1953 CEA Institute at Corning: What Does It Mean?

## Commentators:

Edward J. Foster, Associate Professor of English, Georgia Institute of Technology

W. R. Gaede, Dean of the College, Brooklyn College

Carl A. Lefevre, Director of Research and Professor of English, Pace College

## 10:30 - 11:15 a. m. Refreshments

## 11:15 - 11:45 a. m. Concluding Remarks

Executive Associate: Robert T. Fitzhugh, Associate Professor of English, Brooklyn College. Past President, The College English Association.

Director: Maxwell H. Goldberg, Professor of English, University of Massachusetts. Executive Secretary, The College English Association

Executive Assistants: Bruce Dearing, Assistant Professor of English, Swarthmore College, Member, CEA board of directors

Donald J. Lloyd, Assistant Professor of English, Wayne University. Member, CEA Nominating Committee

## I've Been Reading

J. Gordon Eaker, Literary Editor

Helen C. White. *The Tudor Books of Private Devotion*, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1951. pp. xii + 284. \$4.75.

The author of the present volume has made a beautiful book out of what will seem to many a rather grim subject. After an excellent summary of the development of such books of devotion in the Middle Ages the author goes on to follow their tradition in the later period, a tradition sometimes slightly modified and sometimes so fundamentally changed as to represent the advent of a new day. This is not merely a learned monograph with footnotes discreetly hidden at the end; from her previous work Miss White has brought to her study an extraordinary richness of background and a delicacy of taste that make the book enjoyable even for one who may ordinarily fight shy of religion and prayerbooks.

A few passages may be quoted to illustrate the point: "For the student of the history of thought and feeling here is firsthand evidence for the picking up and tracing of the patterns of the inner life of, in this case, the sixteenth century. The most abundant supply of this material is to be found in the books of private devotion of the time. In a sense, of course, they violate the sanctities of solitary prayer. . . . Some of these prayer books had official standing, and were, in intention and in effect, instruments of official propaganda," (p. 7). . . .

The change in religion in the sixteenth century is almost dramatically presented in the alterations of the books. Thus Edward Hake published the *Imitation of Christ* "tacitly omitting the fourth book" and adding an unrelated treatise. The psalms were printed in one case with the note "If thou wouldest have Christ to come conquer and beat downe the Sirians, Idu-means, Amonites, Papistes, Anti-christians, Nullifidians, Neutralites, and ungracious Pelagians, use the 68 Psalme," (p. 45). The evidence is subtle in some cases, broad in others, but it is abundant. "The fact that the prayers of a moderate Catholic reformer could be taken over by Protestant reformers, and still later from them by Catholic conservatives, anxious to recover ground lost, is fresh proof of the general fluidity of the devotional field at this time, at least in England," (p. 129).

The change from the Primer to the Book of Common Prayer shows in some ways a distinct loss which was not repaired by various later combinations, but one fascinating growth along the way was the composite prayer like that in Edward Dering's "fourme of Morning prayer" (p. 210).

The Wisconsin Press has done a fine piece of work in the format of this publication. But serious fault may be found with the Index (where many items are omitted such as prayers like "the classic *Conditor coeli*," the Godfray primer, and much else), an indication in most books that the author has a literary bent and hopes that the scholarly apparatus will be difficult to use.

HOWARD R. PATCH  
Smith College

## The New Poetry

J. Isaacs, *The Background of Modern Poetry*, New York: E. P. Dutton, 94 pp. \$2.50.

Those who remember Mr. Isaacs' remark at the 1951 English Institute that it is our duty to interpret poetry by every means at our command will appreciate the historical approach of these broadcast lectures to certain misunderstood aspects of modern poetry.

I recall Mr. Orville Prescott's saying that he did not review modern poetry because he could not tell what to make of it. And Mr. J. Donald Adams has recently asked what continuity exists between some recent poetry and the tradition.

Mr. Isaacs' volume answers some of these questions. Every poet, he says, struggles against conventional responses and stereotyped language. Spenser and the Elizabethans were responsive to contemporary problems of expression, and one might add that Browning had a long battle against the charge of obscurity.

Modern tendencies appear more clearly in Poe and the French symbolists. Imagery came to the fore with Ezra Pound and the launching of *Poetry* magazine in 1912. To the many interpretations of Mr. T. S. Eliot, Mr. Isaacs adds some shrewd parallels as evidence that most poets deliberately hunt for rhythms and images to enlarge

their repertoire, often going to foreign languages.

As for science, it has always contributed to poetry—in Donne, in Milton, in Shelley—and in the moderns Mr. Cecil Day Lewis, Mr. Auden, and Mr. MacNeice, our new sciences of psychology and sociology merely take their place alongside the other sciences as sources of imagery and feeling.

Mr. Isaacs concludes with a fine justification of the poet's perennial endeavor to master the world and to reshape its incoherencies and tensions into his own coherencies and harmonies for the benefit of his fellowmen.

J. G. E.

Willard Wattles. *Iron Anvil*. Falmouth Publishing House, Manchester, Maine. 1952. 64 pp. \$2.00.

Some of the old residents of Amherst will remember Willard Wattles—a shy, brooding, yet gay-witted and lovable man. Years ago he taught English at the University of Massachusetts, or as it was known then, the Agricultural College. In his early days his poems appeared in many of the leading magazines and his volume *Letters in Gethsemane* was well received by discriminating critics. Later he taught at Rollins College and on his death in 1950 he left behind many unpublished poems, a good number of which appear in *Iron Anvil*.

Mr. Wattles is well worth reading, for he had the authentic poetic gift which in all but a few cases transcends the expression of an earlier day. He had the true touch; freshness of language, highly disciplined form, and that evocation of almost incommunicable intuition—sometimes deep wonder, sometimes the dark tides of doubt and despair or of haunting vision. "I Know a Trail on Toby" is practically flawless—a poem of sweet recollection expressed with superb directness and delicacy of feeling. Here, as so often elsewhere, the inner world of the poet and the outer world of the senses are permanently harmonized.

NATHAN C. STARR

Fulbright Visiting Lecturer, Kansai University, Osaka, Japan

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## Regional CEA Meetings

New York CEA: Oct. 31, 11 a.m., Museum of Modern Art in N.Y.C. Charles Siepmann of N.Y.U. will speak on education and communication in the verbal and visual arts.

New England CEA: Oct. 31, Wellesley College. There will be three afternoon sessions as follows: I. Thomas Wilcox, Bennington, will discuss *Exercise Exchange*; Lawrence Hall, Bowdoin, will report on a Ford Foundation study of freshman English; John Holmes, Tufts, will talk about college literary magazines. II. Willis Wager, Boston Univ. will discuss the use and misuse of the phonograph in the classroom; and there will be discussions of criticism and advanced writing courses. III. Two panels, one on Whitman (Milton Hindus, Brandeis, Clark Griffith, Harvard), and one on "Three 'Difficult' Topics in English Literature." (Kathleen Lynch, Mt. Holyoke, Katherine Balderston, Wellesley; Jean Sudrann, Mt. Holyoke).

Virginia, W. Virginia, North Carolina CEA: Nov. 14, Sweet Briar College, Lynchburg, Virginia. Mark Van Doren will be the guest speaker. Officers are Mary V. Long, Hollins, Pres.; Justus C. Drake, Wake Forest Col., Vice-Pres.; Mary P. Nichols, Longwood, Sec-treas.

## But Definitely!

Teachers of composition talk much of precise or exact expression, yet painful experience has convinced me that the phrases mean little to the average freshman English class. Tackling that currently most abused of adjectives *definite*, I was led to a statement of simple principle which my classes found helpful. Our problem was to distinguish between the legitimate and illegitimate uses of the adjective and adverb, *definite* and *definitely*.

The principle (overstated perhaps) is that every word one uses has a negative as well as a positive sense; every word implies the negative of its opposite. Thus, if you use *definite*, you are saying also, *not indefinite*, and if, in your context, *not indefinite* has no meaning or application, eschew *definite*. It is out of place in the sentence: "My proposal was met by a definitely favorable response."

## That Two-Handed Engine

Extended by further illustration, the principle has considerable pedagogic usefulness, not the least of which is the bridge it offers between student writing and reading. It helps expand with greater exactness their understanding of connotation and suggests a method of approaching the interpretation of a piece of prose or poetry which will take the student over that difficult hurdle between what the poem is about on a factual level to what the writer is saying about the situation or experience he describes.

For instance, in Emily Dickinson's "Apparently with no Surprise," if the beheading is no surprise to the flower, the implication is clear that it ought to be a surprise to the flower and that it is a surprise to the poet. And so the interpretation of the poem is keyed

## Hooligans or Human Beings?

## Evaluating Mr. Armstrong

Mr. Armstrong's fire-breathing foray against "student evaluations" of their teachers sounds a good deal like *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, and perhaps in taking it seriously I am exposing my obtuseness. But aside from the fact that our acute editor also takes it at face value (unless he is a party to the plot), I fail to recall in recent issues of *The Critic* any point of departure for such a free-swinging satire on the profession as, if it were ironic, this would be. Also there are doubtless persons outside the profession who read *The Critic* who would have no suspicion of a tongue-in-cheek approach; and our standing with "the public" is already precarious enough without spreading the notion that we are all created in the image of a Hollywood sergeant in the Marines. So some rejoinder appears to be in order.

It is obvious that Mr. Armstrong never was a student. Those of us who remember what we thought about our teachers in college know, if we are honest with ourselves, that what we thought was generally right. (I happen to have had the experience of returning as an instructor, after a two-year interval, to the college where I had been an undergraduate.) Those whom we considered asses and dullards really were so; and if we were occasionally too generous in according our esteem to men of shallow minds, it might be argued that if we thought they were good teachers, then, for us at that time, they were. By the same token, one might plausibly contend that if students are convinced that a teacher is incompetent, then, as far as they are concerned, he is. The stereotype of the unpopular teacher, whether fierce or fumbling, whom mature judgment discovers to have been a brilliant mentor with a heart of gold exists only in fiction, or in the maudlin imagination of the old grad who has had too many reunion drinks.

It is also obvious (if we take him seriously) that Mr. Armstrong has never been a teacher, for that name can scarcely be applied to anyone who insists that "student and teacher are born enemies" (What name should be implied, I do not venture to suggest.) One does not recall that Socrates (or any other among the master teachers of the world) insisted on such a relation, and though he made few concessions to his pupils, beyond treating them as human beings, one imagines that he would have fared rather well in a "student evaluation." And why, after all, should anyone choose to follow a calling in which, for a relative pittance, he must devote his days and nights to what he is sure is the hopeless task of trying to educate half-wits and "hooligans"—when it would be so much easier and more rewarding to write TV commercials?

It is not really irrelevant, either, to remark that these mischievous

by this quality of the diction.

While the application is not confined simply to poems where the meaning is implicit in the diction, the Dickinson poem, demanding explanation of *accidental*, *unmoved*, and *approving*, offers a good test of the principle's usefulness.

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and uneducable dolts whom we would not trust to give us a telephone number, we are willing to trust with the weapons of modern war—and in a year or two, if not already, with that more delicate and complicated and crucial mechanism, the ballot. And if we would like them to use the latter more intelligently than older generations have often done, we are proceeding in an odd manner by demanding of them a degree of servility to their nominal superiors not surpassed by any imposed under Fascist, Communist, or other totalitarian regimes.

And even if students were not the relatively decent and moderately intelligent human beings that in fact they are, their "evaluations" would still be the only means by which the merit of a teacher, as a teacher, could be judged. Any administrator who cares at all about the quality of teaching in his college or university does and must accept students' opinions of their teachers. An orderly and systematic evaluation of the faculty by the students (planned and administered by the faculty itself and not by some brash young assistant to the President or Dean) would help ensure that the teacher is fairly judged. It would also prevent a department head from having to face the problem of what to do about an amiable and well meaning teacher who according to the unanimous testimony of major students had simply nothing to teach them; but who had been allowed to remain on the staff for many years because the previous head of the department was indifferent or inaccessible to student "evaluations."

(Faced with the alternatives of injustice—at that point—to one faculty member or injustice to many students, I chose the former.)

I conclude with the question, "If students do not know whether they are being well taught, who does?" And if Mr. Armstrong's answer is, "The teacher," I have two more questions. First, does he contend that there are no incompetent teachers? Second, how many teachers did he ever hear confess to being incompetent?

These random remarks do not even outline the argument that could be advanced against Mr. Armstrong's position if space permitted. And one cannot help wondering, after all, whether he really does mean what he says. One is tempted to daily with the pleasant thought that his "little charges" emerge from class, after being ruthlessly flagellated for their shortcomings as students of English, grinning cheerfully and saying to each other: "What a guy! Boy, he sure is a good teacher!"

ELSWORTH BARNARD  
University of Chicago

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